26½

# THE JOURNAL OF INDIAN ART AND INDUSTRY

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

Vol. IX.

APRIL, 1901] [No. 74.

COLLECTOR & MAGISTRATE, 25 MAR 1902 TANJORE.

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BY

COLONEL RIVETT-CARNAC, C.I.E., F.S.A.,

*Aide-de-Camp to H.M. the King.*

Illustrated by

15 Plates of Indian Metal Work (65–79).

RAM SINGH DEL. MAYO SCHOOL OF ART LAHORE

Published under the patronage of the Government of India.

PHOTOGRAPHED, PRINTED, AND PUBLISHED BY W. GRIGGS, ELM HOUSE, HANOVER STREET, PECKHAM, LONDON.

LONDON AGENT—BERNARD QUARITCH, 15, PICCADILLY, W.

# IRON WORK.

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HANOVER STREET, PECKHAM,

LONDON, S.E.

The Journal of Indian Art and Industry.

# ON SOME SPECIMENS OF INDIAN METAL WORK.

By J. H. RIVETT-CARNAC, Esq., C.I.E., F.S.A., *Indian Civil Service (retired)*,

*Colonel Indian Volunteers; Aide-de-Camp to H.M. the King.*

Of recent years, thanks to the liberality of residents in India, and travellers interested in the handiwork of the peoples, various collections of Indian metal work have been exhibited at the Imperial Institute. Before these loan collections were broken up, some photographs of selected specimens were made. Several of these plates are now to be published in the *Journal of Indian Art*, and as a description of a collection of Hindu deities and sacrificial implements was recently published by me in this journal, I have been requested to contribute a paper to accompany these plates, relating to the classes of Indian metal work which have come under my notice during a long residence in India.

This interesting subject has been fully treated at various times in standard works, such as Sir George Birdwood's *Industrial Arts of India*,[1] and in several papers published in this Journal, which, unfortunately, are not available to me at present for reference. As some into whose hands the separate issues of the *Journal of Indian Art* may come, will possibly find themselves in the same position, it may be permitted to return to this subject, to attempt a brief sketch of this class of Indian manufacture as presented by my own experience as an old collector, and to add some notes as to the localities in which the best types are available, together with a note of warning against the danger of the "European improvements" which are being introduced, and which are steadily undermining the form of much that is excellent in Indian design.

Although some localities are specially celebrated for their manufacture, and for superior excellence in pattern and treatment, there is hardly a large bazaar in India in which fine specimens of metal work may not by good fortune be picked up, with the aid of some patience, good-humour and tact. Nearly every good-sized village has its "cunning worker" in metal. The profession in its various branches is a caste, or guild, and the boy learns and follows his father's trade from an early age, and whilst heredity supplies the touch, and possibly the good taste, he has the specimens and the knowledge of the old forms handed down, and adhered to by his conservative surroundings. The very neediest class of the community, with hardly enough food to keep themselves alive, with but little raiment, and the thinnest of thatch over their heads, may be limited to earthen pots as water and cooking vessels. But the first stage in improvement in condition is to metal vessels, which even the poor can command, and which there is a local industry to supply in iron, brass, or copper. The next stage in advance is to the precious metals. The rich *bunniah* or merchant may have his *lotah*, or water vessel, and some other accompaniments, of silver, whilst, at the native courts, the Maharajah or favourites may run to gold for their paraphernalia, attaining even to gold ornamented with enamel and precious stones, as may be seen in some of the specimens from the collection of the Earl of Powis, brought home by the great Lord Clive, and which, it is hoped, will come under notice in the second part of this paper. The ordinary family, however, must have gone very far before the ordinary metals are discarded for domestic utensils. Those who are well set up in brass or copper pots and pans are well-to-do, and these are the chief assets when the household goods come to the hammer, and when there is no land to satisfy the money-lender's claim.

Besides all these, there are the many beautiful articles in the richer metals which, whether ornamented with precious stones or not, are called jewellery. It is proposed in this paper to notice the vases, and similar work made in copper, brass, and sometimes in silver, and to leave a brief description of the higher class of manufacture for the second part to be published in the succeeding issue of this journal.

The ordinary brass and copper household vessels, pots and platters, turned on the wheel and then hammered, are without ornament, and the scrubbing and cleaning they undergo would soon remove any tracery. Their shapes are good; the *lotah*, or water vessel, taken originally from the gourd, and the larger brass vessel in which water is kept in the corner of the homestead, are familiar from the many specimens imported of late years as ornaments into every part of Europe. The industry is common to every part of India, flourishes in the Deccan, and of old days, when the Ganges traffic was important, and the road from Bombay struck the river at Mirzapur, that place was celebrated for the manufacture, some portion of which is still retained. The brass sacrificial vessels give more opening for taste, as will be seen from the illustrations in the paper recently contributed to this journal. Some specimens of copper vases for holding Ganges water—of melon shape, the colour deepened by age—which have been collected by me, are remarkably beautiful. Pilgrims to holy places carry away reminiscences of their visits; and sacred Benares, close to Mirzapur, was always well supplied with *lotahs* and other brass work from that city, and has itself a considerable manufacture. On these *lotahs* it was the fashion to engrave the *das avatar*, or ten incarnations of the god Vishnu, and the ornamentation was carried on to the platters and other brass goods of the bazaar. The work took the fancy of the European visitors of Benares, greatly multiplied by the increased facilities of travelling. Every visitor carried away several specimens, which in the early days had some merit of execution. The work then became the fashion, as it was comparatively cheap, and lent itself to decorative purposes, and large quantities were exported to Europe, and specimens are now to be seen in almost every continental city. With the increased demand, necessitating large numbers of pieces being turned out in a hurry, the work degenerated, the engraving being carelessly executed. What is called Benares brass is not now so much in

[1] *The Industrial Arts of India*, by Sir George Birdwood, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., &c.

favour, though well selected specimens have their value, some of the bowls being very effective and handsome. The chief fault in the work is, the figures of the deities do not stand out sufficiently, the engraving being shallow. With some difficulty, a brass bowl, with gods in high relief, was secured by me, the work being hammered repoussé and bold: this, however, is the only specimen I have seen, and it will be figured in a later plate. Of late years all sorts of European shapes, covered with Hindu gods, have been introduced into the Benares brass manufacture, and the philistine tumbler and mug, and other well-known forms, are constantly to be seen, requiring only the legend "A Present from Benares," to make them quite complete for the British market. These European "improvements" are doing much to demoralise the local metal industry, just as the introduction of aniline dyes and foreign patterns is affecting the textile fabrics and carpets of famous Indian manufacture.

The manufacture of the various metal objects used in Hindu worship, which is brisk at Benares, is not affected by outside influence, and, as will be seen by the plates in the paper published in a former number of this journal, many beautiful forms, and much excellent workmanship has survived. Of the hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims who flock annually to Benares from all parts of India, many bring with them their sacrificial outfit, besides their drinking vessels and other metal requisites. Of these, immense quantities change hands. A pilgrim spends more than he can well afford at the shrines, and to pay his way home must part with some of his possessions. Or he prefers new lamps to old lamps, and parts with a *lotah*, laboriously ornamented by a workman in the far-off Deccan, many years ago, and which may have been long in his family, for an up-to-date cup made in the holy city. And as the sick, the aged, and the feeble form a large proportion of the visitors, and as epidemic is not unknown, the deaths are numerous; and large quantities of metal articles, brought from every corner of India, and exhibiting every type of Hindu artistic treatment are left behind, and find their way into the bazaars. These used generally to go to the melting-pot, being little prized for their forms by the dealers. Many years ago, whilst prospecting in the Benares bazaar, one of our party came across an old water-vessel of undoubted merit, and our eyes were opened to a veritable mine of wealth in artistic metal work, in every way immensely superior to the modern Benares goods then coming into vogue. We spent there an eventful and red-lettered afternoon. The ideas of all of us were pretty sound as to what we considered good, and there was little difference in our tastes. So it was arranged that we should forage separately in different quarters of the bazaar, and search the stores of the old metal dealers, collect all that seemed suitable, and divide the spoil at the end of the day. The astonishment of the native mind was unbounded, and it was some little time before the dealers could be brought to realize that we really wished for the oil-encrusted, discarded, dingy specimens heaped up in the corners of the back rooms, ready to be broken up for the melting-pot, rather than the bright tempting platters and vases of the main streets. We were all thought more or less cracked: but then the "Sahibs" are often more or less eccentric. Bushel loads of old metal ware were eventually turned out, and in the mass of rubbish there occasionally appeared a dainty lamp, a grotesque Ganesh, or an artistically engraved *lotah*—just as a valuable old coin may occasionally be met with in a cloth full of ordinary copper pice. These were set aside, and eventually paid for at the rate for old metal, and great was the astonishment and amusement of the owners when an extra rupee or so was thrown in, with the promise that we were open to deal on the same liberal terms on the morrow. The *dallals*, or brokers or touts, with which the bazaar swarms, were soon armed with samples, and rummaged the smelting shops in search of the "*purána chiz*," or old things.

The result of their researches were various, often successful, and occasionally comic. One would be pursued by a man with the upper half of a broken British candlestick in one hand; in the other, the remains of the metal-work of a battered cruet-stand, tempered by the presence of an enviable specimen of the best Nepalese brass, a delicately worked shrine-back entirely to our taste. Those were halcyon days for the searchers after the "*purána chiz*"; the supply was plentiful, and even with the largesse occasionally thrown in for encouragement, prices ruled low. Our party included amongst its enthusiastic collectors, the late Mr. John Campbell of Islay and Colonel Lord Ralph Kerr, whose houses still testify to the success of those early days; while the corridors of the old Habsburg Castle of Wildeck, our present abode, contain many relics of our expeditions. In the division of the spoil, first choice went by lot. The contents of our bags were spread out on long tables; each selected a piece in turn; no schoolboys in the distribution of "prog" could have been more scrupulously fair in their transactions, or more hilarious over their feast. Since those days the "*purána chiz*" research has been rather overdone; as no self-respecting tourist or visitor investing in the new work can now overlook the claims of the old brass and copper vessels. The brokers and dealers have learnt the trade, competition is keen, prices have risen, and when I left India, finds were few and the cost was commensurate. And thus it happened that in those days, a successful morning in the Benares bazaar might secure for one trophies of metal work, not only of local manufacture, but gathered under the conditions above noticed, from every part of India—the relics of the pilgrims to this far-famed shrine. In a few hours one might by good fortune collect varied specimens which only journeys to far-off provinces, or the chance presence there of sympathetic friends with a knowledge of one's tastes, could render possible. The variety in the patterns on the *lotahs* was great, and the distinctive treatment by the workmen of the various provinces was soon recognisable. To us, the most highly prized specimens came from the Deccan and Nepal, the latter state supplying profusely ornamented vessels in great variety. The melon-shaped, fluted copper vase, for holding a store of Ganges water, was a happy find, and one would carry it to a fellow-worker in a neighbouring street, with the triumph that one would display a woodcock early in the season. I have since, in an English drawing room, seen such vases holding the Maréchal Niel rose, and the contrast of hues is striking. The deities, in various sizes and forms also came under contribution, with grotesque and occasionally artistic claims. What was, however, generally most to be admired was the varied and graceful shapes of the vessels obtained in considerable variety, and which are now known to readers from the illustrations of this and other works on Indian Art. The best combination of colour is copper with brass, a favourite mixture—the one representing the Ganges, the other the Jumna river—*Gunga-Jumni*, as it is called.

Benares is not the only place in India where treasures are to be found. A ramble in any good-sized bazaar, if intelligently conducted, may bring with it successful results, which I have likened to the happiness of a good

bag of a pleasant day's sport. But, for success, this must be undertaken under conditions often difficult for the tourist. One must know something of the language, learn where to go, and how to manage the people. To be accompanied by the *Chupprassie*, or by the local policeman, who generally dogs the steps of the visitor, is fatal. One might as well stalk the *sambhar* accompanied by a gentleman performing on the french-horn. The *Chupprassie* has been likened by poor Aberich-Mackay to the colorado-beetle, and the native policeman is hardly behind him in his attributes. They both have an eye to perquisites, or percentage, or *dusturie*, or what the Indian, according to his standard, calls "*huq*," "one's due," and so accurately translated, according to British unsympathetic ideas, as "illegal gratification." The dealer will hardly open his stores in the face of such company, for any deal is discounted by the subsequent and enforced claim, by your attendants, of a share of the price paid. The company, too, of the inquisitive and rancid crowd of idlers, *dálals*, or touts and brokers, the *gamin* inevitable in India, as elsewhere, disturbs the game, and leaves you little chance, and, as in most sport, you must proceed quietly and cautiously, and work by yourself. If the dealer is flurried or alarmed he will not do business,—at least, not the sort of dealer you want: the man in the main street, with the bright British and Benares ware is never inaccessible. He with the old coins and the treasure-trove trinkets has them packed away in a back room, and does not wish the gaping crowd, or intelligent policeman, to know of their quantity or whereabouts. If you are quiet and he feels some confidence in you, he may, with a little persuasion, produce his stores. And then is your chance. One has carried back from India many a pleasant remembrance of successful hauls under what, at first sight, seemed unpromising conditions. And the cabinet of gold Gupta coins in the India Museum at Calcutta, and many specimens of art work in various other museums, testify to the result of one's rambles in out-of-the-way bazaars, and should encourage seekers after what is of interest and of real antiquarian value, hidden away in the stores of the metal dealers of all denominations, so many of which treasures, unfortunately, find their way to the melting-pot.

Nor need the search be limited to metal ware, to old coins, or the "*purána chiz*" in brass or copper. There is, or rather was, a virgin mine of valuables in many of the larger bazaars of the great cities of India, especially those which, like Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, and others, had been attached formerly to rich native courts. Some years ago, few thought of looking for old china in the hut of the man dealing out tobacco in small quantities, or in a squalid sweetmeat shop. A friend of mine discovered a valuable vase encrusted with dirt at such a tobacconists, who gladly accepted a couple of rupees for the specimen. And a sweetmeat-seller willingly allowed me to replace an old blue platter with a new dish, and was amazed when, out of ordinary decency, I felt constrained to add thereto several rupees, with a promise of good payment for similar specimens. But these finds soon became known. An enterprising European promptly covered the country with agents, who wisely bought up all the old china, and cases full of excellent specimens were shipped by him home during the year, and the proceeds well supplemented the modest salary in the depreciated rupee which he was receiving at an out-of-the way station in India. Since then the antiquarian dealer, unknown in India in my early days, has become an institution, and the bazaars are swept nearly clean, by his agents and himself, of everything of value and of interest, whether of metal work, or of manuscripts, china, coins, arms, embroideries, or what not. The local dealers, too, have been educated in the trade. For the tourist, or even the resident, there is not much chance left now in such regularly whipped water. Occasionally the practised angler gets a chance, and the many difficulties add some delight to success in the sport.

So much, then, for the old work. Those who content themselves with modern metal work have full opportunities in India of gratifying their taste, and there is much in many of these wares which may deservedly be appreciated, and in which a satisfactory collection may be made to decorate an Indian room in a western home. Enough has been said of ordinary Benares brass ware. A pleasant contrast to this will be found in the Tanjore work of copper encrusted with silver or with brass, and which is more elaborately treated in design and execution and has a higher merit and value Of this some specimens will be seen in Plate 72 which accompanies this paper. It is generally adorned with Hindu deities, accompanied by graceful tracery interwoven with the flowers and plants sacred to the service of the gods. The ornamentation is in relief, standing well out, and often carefully finished, and is not graved or scratched as on the Benares brass. But here also European improvement is affecting the shapes, leaving the engraved designs to the old treatment; and the Hindu gods and their incarnations may be seen circling round the unmistakable body of the British domestic teapot, to which is added an ordinary spout, and a cobra-entwined handle. "But," says the dealer, "the sahibs or mem-sahibs (ladies) like it so, and we sell to these." The old forms still remain, and are to be obtained if wanted, for there is yet some local demand for them. Many will consider that the brass harmonises better with the copper basis than the bright overlaid silver now in vogue, in which the contrast is at first rather staring. But when mellow, there is no fault to be found with this production, if the shape of the vase of Tanjore work is good. Some of the most beautiful of the "*purána chiz*" collected at Benares were of this class—the overlaid patterns sometimes geometrical, often of graceful tracery, with the deities excellently modelled. The Hindu, as already explained, prefers the copper and brass combination—the one metal representing the sacred Ganges, the other the Jumna, and of this style was all the old work.

Of good copper vessels there is much that is artistic still to be found in India, and the melon-shaped water vessels of graceful design have already been noticed. The platters are occasionally well engraved with carefully executed tracery, and are sometimes fluted. Being mostly used by Muhammadans, there is an absence of graven images. The reddish copper ware of Cashmere, resembling old gold, is very handsome, and the shapes and designs, unless demoralised by European models, are often excellent, the *serais* and water vases being effective for decoration.

Morabad Ware also has come much into vogue among European purchasers, and has often great merit. In that part of India there is a large Muhammadan population, and this metal ware supplied the tastes of the richer classes. The ornamentation is thus confined to tracery, figures and deities finding thereon no place. The material is brass; the pattern is graved. The brass body is then tinned, so that the substance resembles silver. The graving is then filled in with a black or coloured enamel, and the effect is excellent. It somewhat resembles the Bidri work (also a Muhammadan industry), save that the colours are reversed, the basis in the latter case

being black, the ornamentation, silver, standing out white.

Bidree Work (a composition of copper, lead, and tin, made black, and resembling iron) is of a finer and more expensive character. The best specimens come from Hyderabad, Deccan, where a rich Muhammadan court has long supported the industry. It is to be met with in the shapes, and vessels which are used by well-to-do persons, and some excellent examples of hookah-stands and the like can be purchased. For the reasons mentioned above, the work is generally confined to tracery—the basis being dark, the pattern graven or eaten out by acid, and then filled in with silver. A small vase for Ganges water (picked up in the Benares bazaar), exquisitely ornamented with flower scrolls and figures of the deities, is the only Hindu specimen that has come into my possession. But possibly others exist, although they can hardly be common. As the European demand for this ware is limited, the shapes have not yet been injuriously affected by so-called civilised taste.

At Lucknow (which also possessed, until the annexation, a luxurious Muhammadan court) there still exists a metal industry which may have been an imitation of Bidri ware—iron vessels ornamented with silver, the silver being overlaid, as in the Tanjore ware, instead of inlaid, as with Bidri. The designs, also Muhammadan in treatment, are bold, though, from the nature of the work, lacking the delicacy of the superior Deccan art.

The most beautiful of all the brass work comes from outside India—from Nepal, the independent State in the Himalayas to the north-east. Here a wealthy native court still survives to encourage and support its artificers, and the country is far removed from European influences. Sacred places abound, attracting many pilgrims, and the many vessels for ritual, or ornament, or use, retain their purely Eastern character, whilst many beautiful designs have been handed down for generations, and are adhered to with conservative tenacity. The vessels are generally cast, and then tooled, and often exhibit a luxury of detail in divinities, tracery, garlands intertwined with the sacred serpent, and the snake is also invariably combined with the tree in the beautiful shrine-backs, a speciality of Nepal. The sacred lamps, placed on the floors of the temples or hung from the roofs, and used as *arthis* in ritual, are of special excellence, and are occasionally to be met with at Benares, where they have probably been left by some Nepalese devotee, or brought away by some pilgrim from the Ganges valley. Nepal, as yet, has not been opened out to the tourist, whilst our own officials are limited to the British Resident and his staff. The country, as yet, has hardly been laid open to contribution for art metal ware, though Colonel Sir Edward Durand, a former Resident, has been fortunate in making a fine collection of some of the best work, specimens of which have already been figured in this journal, and another of which will find a place later on.

The above sketch has no pretence to be a detailed survey of the storehouses of Indian work in the baser metals. As has already been mentioned, the industry flourishes in every town and Province, and so supplies local wants; and Nagpur and Poonah will contain not only all the ordinary specimens of this kind, but occasionally treasures made by an enthusiastic worker for a rich patron, as well also as far-away Assam, or the better known Benares of the tourist. The best preserved survival will, however, always be in the neighbourhood of courts, and there is no State in Central India, or elsewhere, which cannot produce excellent workmen, and excellent specimens in brass and in copper, entirely Indian in their treatment, as made for the local—not the foreign demand.

Leaving the baser metals, and coming to the workers in silver, gold, and precious stones, the same remark applies. But a silver hookah and the like are luxuries, for which the demand must depend on the wealth of the community. The tendency of British rule is to level down, so that whilst, save in times of exceptional severity, the lower classes are better off, with greater security, and an immense development of trade to assist them, the rich, luxurious—often idle—class, the supporters of art industries, is disappearing, save in Native States. In British territory, the court favourites, male and female (the patrons of the goldsmith and jeweller, and of the workers in valuable tissues) are nearly extinct, or have little money left for such vanities. The trader, or *bunniah*, whom our rule is enriching, has not yet fully developed a taste for such articles, and the trade perforce languishes. Many of the artificers and their descendants are turning to more remunerative employ, often to the railway workshops, where the Indian craftsman—in patience, in temper, and in delicacy of execution—is found to be almost without an equal. As will be explained in greater detail in the second part of this paper, the poorer classes carry their spare cash on their persons in the shape of silver ornaments, regarding these as investments. The trader requires much of his capital to turn over in his business, and perhaps invests occasionally in Government paper, occasionally in trinkets. There is thus a steady demand, in average times, on the worker in the precious metals. The women exert a powerful influence, and their thoughts, with little else to distract them, often turn to jewellery and finery. Besides being an investment, trinkets are the appanage of a self-respecting establishment, and the well-to-do man's wife and children must possess a decent outfit. As a man's means increase, there is a steady progression from the plain silver bangle to elaborate ornaments in the same metal; then to gold trinkets in endless variety; and eventually to precious stones; the process being inverted as hard times, or the expenses of a marriage affect the financial position of the investor. But it is a long cry to domestic vessels of the more valuable metals. A man must indeed be rich to command the silversmith's or goldsmith's aid for ornaments other than those he can carry on his person, or with which to adorn his family. At the courts, and among the rich mercantile classes, silver hookahs, boxes for betel nut, and the like, will be found. And the Maharajahs and chiefs and exceptionally wealthy individuals may think that gold, or gold encrusted with jewels, is necessary for their magnificence. But such cases are comparatively rare, and the commissions to the craftsman must be comparatively limited, and such articles seldom appear in the market.

The European collector will have his taste satisfied for silver goods by the Cutch work, by the products of Cashmere, where *serais* and other water vessels, besides the copper specimens already mentioned, are reproduced in silver, sometimes ornamented with gold, the patterns being well executed and tasteful. The Lucknow dealers, too, have developed the industry of later years, and do a large business with travellers and residents. But of this class of work the Burmese silver is deservedly the most celebrated, and is the boldest and most meritorious in execution. But it is expensive, and this new Province is beyond the range of the ordinary tourist, and visitors are few, and the demand is chiefly limited to purchasers on the spot, who can ensure careful workmanship. A really good Burmese silver bowl is a delight. The cunning Lucknow workers have learnt to take casts of such

bowls; these are subsequently "tooled," and the result is fairly satisfactory, though below the original in merit.

So far jewellery, in which silver and gold ornaments for personal adornment are included, as well as those set with precious stones, has not come under notice. This, with the variety and taste and excellent workmanship of the specimens seen all over India, in its many countries and among its many peoples, is rather a vast subject. Still it may fairly be included under metal work, and an attempt will be made to touch on it in a later paper, with which it is hoped the jewelled articles brought home by the great Lord Clive, and now in the collection of the Earl of Powis, may be shewn in the beautiful photographs taken by Mr. Griggs.

The illustrations which accompany this issue of the journal, and which have suggested a rambling chat on Indian metal work, founded on the remembrance of pleasant days passed in examining and collecting specimens, now call for brief notice. It will be understood that the plates are not intended to illustrate the text, and that the foregoing remarks have little reference to them. The photographs are themselves of high merit, and accurately and in minute detail reproduce the forms and the workmanship of the various exhibits. The articles represented have been taken from the loan collections already noticed, but as to the manner of their selection, no information is available to me. It would have been satisfactory to see all these collections as exhibited; to have obtained permission to select examples of special merit in form or workmanship, and so to have arranged them in order as to illustrate and emphasize the best class of work of the several Provinces. But the collections have been returned, the Exhibition is closed, and there is no hope of any such arrangement being possible. The remarks in the earlier part of this paper may indicate that the specimens are in several cases such as would hardly have been selected by me as specially meritorious from my own point of view of excellence. But some of them represent what is now largely made, and for which there would appear to be a good market, which must ever influence the producer. And if the designs and shapes are not what will commend themselves to some, the details often evince taste, care, and distinct merit; and for any unsatisfactory result the influence of European "improvement" is unmistakably responsible. Still there are some pieces which exhibit the true native idea and treatment, pure and undefiled. The others have their claim to reproduction and notice, as assisting in teaching the lesson of what may with advantage be avoided.

Taking first, Plate 65, the not unfamiliar form of the British race-cup, or loving-cup, with its handles, may possibly be recognised. It was probably new to the native craftsman, who has gone somewhat wrong in the proportions of the body of the vessel to its accompaniments. The miniature elephant on the lid is playing havoc in a vineyard, amidst proportionately colossal grapes, which are evidently intended to indicate the festive purposes for which the cup is designated. Leaving the lid and coming to the body of the work, the native deities, the tracery and the panelling are quite the workman's own, shewing good finish, and are probably the reproduction of ideas with which he has often ornamented vessels of quite a different type. With the base he is more at home. If it is rather large for the rest of the work, the designer was probably at fault. The pedestal might have served for a lamp or some such ornament, and the details are all good. "But the Sahib would have the shape thus." And the Sahib is the master, and provides the solid rupees as the material, and pays in silver a quarter, or even more than that, of the weight of the vase to the silversmith for his work. The owner must have been evidently quite satisfied; and, after all, it may be one's own taste that is at fault—not the designer's. The cup was, I learn, made in Cutch.

Plate 66 is a much happier adaptation of what appears to be Cutch silver work in good relief; the details of the vase, as the photograph clearly shews, being excellent in design and in finish. Here the handles, of elephants' heads, are elaborate and well modelled, instead of the bare additions to the elaborately ornamented vases shewn in Plates 65 and 70. This is apparently part of a handsome table-service, and is after the manner of the old wine-coolers, now used as flower vases for decoration.

In Plate 67 a good class of work is produced on a silver box of Indian form, inasmuch as it follows the lines of the gourd, which, before metal was to hand, served for vessels of many sorts, as did the buds and flowers for the ornaments which have since largely been adopted for personal adornment in every class of metal, and with pearls, and precious stones. The manner in which the pattern on the lid changes not too abruptly from that on the body, the general character being still preserved, is happy. Dainty boxes, used to hold betel leaves, areca nut, and lime, are common among the better classes, and give an occasional chance to the gold or silver smith of exhibiting his skill. These do not often come into the market; for, be it understood, few articles are made, save in tourist centres, to suit the popular taste, or exposed in shop windows on the chance of sale. The silversmith, and even the goldsmith, is not a capitalist, but a worker for daily wage, and has no spare rupees—either to provide the metal basis, or to invest in speculation on the chance of sale of his goods. He is supplied with the coins, which are melted down and then hammered into shape, and the payment for the work depends chiefly on the bazaar estimate of his ability, multiplied by the number of hours or days spent on the work.

The vase of hammered silver (Plate 68), excellent in workmanship, with flowered scrolls and graceful panels all finished to a nicety, but bold withal in pattern, is of the shape of some of the old-fashioned water vases of the Benares bazaar, and so commends itself to an old collector of metal ware. The work appears to be that of Cutch, but enough has been said to indicate the view that the silversmith in many parts of India can produce good work.

The bold, carefully hammered work of the silver vase of Plate 69 stands out in every detail in this splendid photograph. The shape appears to be partly borrowed from the *serai*, which, however, has not been followed in the neck and top. But the workmanship is of high class. And then the *serai* is intended to hold water: this much more ambitious vessel, with its vines and grapes, is evidently designed for wine, so that a different treatment was demanded.

In Plate 70 there is evidence of Indian art "improved" upon by European influence. The lines of the vase follows partially those of the *lotah*, the true form being shewn in the examples in Plate 76. These have been left when approaching the neck. The addition of handles, and a flat with a group of figures, endows the whole effort with a character of its own. It may be the original design of a native craftsman, whose ideas have got rather mixed after a study of European models. Whether the result is considered satisfactory or not, must

depend on individual taste. But it may fairly be advanced that this is not an example of the original ancient Indian idea of form. The details of the work on the body of the vase include popular scenes from the Hindu pantheon, in panels, with graceful floral scrolls all in relief of characteristic Indian work. But coming to the group on the lid, here the artist has got out of his depth in attempting something to which he has not been accustomed. Krishna, with his flute, is surrounded by the milkmaids. All the figures are stiff and wooden, and the whole effect can hardly be considered pleasing.

On Plate 71 is figured a silver *serai*, or water vessel, of delicate Cashmere ware. It will be noticed that this lacks the boldness of the hammered scroll work of the Cutch vase on Plate 66 and others. The handles are new to me, and the design may be more or less Persian, and differs from that of the ordinary graceful Indian earthen *serai* turned on the wheel, the stem of which is narrow at the base, swells at the centre, contracting again towards the top. The flower work and arabesques follow the lines of Muhammadan architectural ornamentation.

Plate 72 contains two specimens of Indian art, pure and simple. They are the rose-water bottles, out of which scent is served on ceremonial visits. That on the right may be considered stiff and severe in form, but it is entirely of the country. The design of the other is much more ambitious, and clever. The central flower is somewhat conventional, but the stem, base and top are graceful, and the birds are happily introduced, so as to break the line. They may be parrots, or not improbably intended for the popular "*chakwi-chakwas*," the fond pair, doomed to separation, who call to one another plaintively through the night, from either side of the river or valley, in the tones from which they have their name.

Plate 73 shews a large spectacled brass cobra, erect, of the shape familiar from the Benares and other Sivite temples. The lower part is evidently intended to be placed around the *lingam* of this worship. The snake is represented with seven lesser heads, which number is generally found in the snake canopy surmounting the deity. The specimen has apparently been cast, and has not had much care bestowed upon it by a practised metal-worker.

Plate 74 (from the collection of Lieut.-Colonel Sir Edward Durand, Bart., C.B.). The columnal lamp-stand, cast in brass, is from Nepal, and is one of the class to which allusion has been made in the account of our Benares successes. A simple holder, of the shape of the vestal lamp, is placed on the top, the wick hanging out as a tongue. These lamps are used in the temples and in private houses, and are placed on the floor, the light being supplemented by hanging lamps of quaint and graceful design, which may occasionally be seen successfully utilised for electric light in London houses, as a relief to the conventional forms to which one is generally condemned by the electric fitter. The shape and proportions are as satisfactory as all the details, which, step by step, are carried out in pleasing variety. The design follows, to some extent, the form and pattern of the wood-carving, which is of high excellence.

The platter on Plate 75 is another specimen of Tanjore work, similar to that on the *lotahs* above described. There are few articles of this class of Indian metal ware more effective, the contrast of the two colours used shewing out well. The floral leaves and scrolls in the concentric circles surround a central plaque, on which Krishna is represented playing on the flute, with the sacred bull behind him. The work is in relief as in the other specimens, with the second metal overlaid.

The small vase, also included in the plate, has this to be said against it—that the snakes or cobras supporting the bowl have reason to complain of the manner in which they have been shorn of their proportions. The "idea" appears to have been taken from the dolphin of our sea-girt kingdom, occasionally used in British vases, cobras taking their place here as being better adapted to a cup ornamented with Eastern scrolls. Even the comparatively sturdy dolphins appear under difficulties, and at a disadvantage in such acrobatic postures. In the case of snakes, which are long and slim, the difficulties are proportionately increased. This seems to have been partly met by snipping each snake down to the length of a corpulent earth-worm, with whom no self-respecting cobra would admit the most distant connection.

In Plate 76 European and Indian forms are shewn side by side; whether intentionally or not, for contrast, cannot for certain be advanced. But the shapes of the two upper examples will be recognised as those of the familiar tumbler and finger bowl. Below, in the centre, is a reproduction of a chalice or cup, flanked on either side by the Indian *lotah*. The work in each case appears good. It may not unfairly be said that a bowl is a bowl all the world over, and that the shape, whether that of the finger-glass or the flower-vase, is simple and not open to objection. As for the chalice, it has evidently been copied from an European original, or sketch, though it seems doubtful whether the proportions have been carefully observed. Given a pattern, not a sketch, a clever native workman will copy anything exactly; even as a native *darzi*, or tailor, if given a coat to copy, will faithfully reproduce it—even to obvious defects in buttons, or a patch, or the like. Coming to the *lotahs*, we have good specimens of real Indian work which will commend themselves to the taste of those who prefer it to those patterns affected by European influences. These are both Tanjore work of copper overlaid with brass, the figures and floral pattern being hammered out in relief—the second metal being sometimes brass, sometimes silver, overlaid, and then tooled and finished. They are specimens of the Gunga-jumni *lotahs*, the discovery of which among the "*purána chiz*" of the Benares bazaar was as a joy to us. On the one to the left, it will be seen, members of the Hindu pantheon appear between panels surmounted by floral scrolls. The effect on the other of the flowers in bright metal on the dark copper is always excellent. The borders above and below are similarly treated with alternate copper and brass, or silver tongues, leaves, or scrolls.

Plates 77 and 78 exhibit respectively a Burmese silver bowl, and one of the class which, of recent years, has been produced by the silversmiths of the Lucknow bazaar. It may appear somewhat unfair to place them side by side, as the one costs, weight for weight, perhaps three times as much as the other. If you give the Oudh man 100 rupees, he will put all the silver into the bowl, and ask 25 rupees for his work on the finished article. The Burman knows that his is much superior work, in much higher relief, and is of much better design, and requires much more time and care, so fairly enough he charges proportionately. The figures on the Burmese bowl appear to represent the "*Pui*," or masked dance of Burmah, or the figures may be some of the thirty-seven "*Nats*," or Burmese royal ghosts, treated of recently by Colonel Temple, C.I.E., in a former number of this journal. The

photograph, though good, does not shew the figures sufficiently clearly to admit of ready identification. The Lucknow workman has taken the jungle for his subject, and has represented men, birds, beasts, and trees in much variety. The Lucknow craftsman is, as already noticed, beginning to adopt Burmese models, with the assistance of moulds. Since this was written, it has been suggested to me that both bowls are from Burmah. Of this I am doubtful: but if they are, one is of much better work than the other.

Plate 79, with which the series of illustrations concludes, is a specimen of work not Indian, but Persian,—a grotesque peacock elaborately fabricked in thin brass, of a delicate filigree class of work familiar to most collectors. The result is effective in its way, and well befits an Oriental room. But this bird seems too proud to associate with the more modest forms of Indian workmanship previously included, and for this reason, probably, has been commissioned to bring up the rear, all by himself. Since this was written, I have been informed that the work is Indian, from a Persian design.

It is proposed to include, in the next paper, some examples of strictly Indian art of old date, from the collection of the Earl of Powis. In bringing this instalment to a close, it may fairly be noticed that these notes have been written under the disadvantage of absence from one's books, so that one has only an imperfect memory on which to rely for one's remarks. And any attempt to transport one's self back to India, and its wares and surroundings, is difficult, when one writes amid the deep snow of the high Alps, with the thermometer well below zero, in contrast to the warm and muggy atmosphere of the Benares bazaar.

*Grindelwald, Switzerland, March* 1901. J. H. RIVETT-CARNAC.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

15 Plates of Metal Work.

Nos. 65, 66, 67, 68, 69. Cutch. 70. Jeypore. 71. Cashmere. 72, 73, 74. Southern India. 75, 76. Madras and Burma. 77, 78. Burma. 79. Indian reproduction from a Persian original.

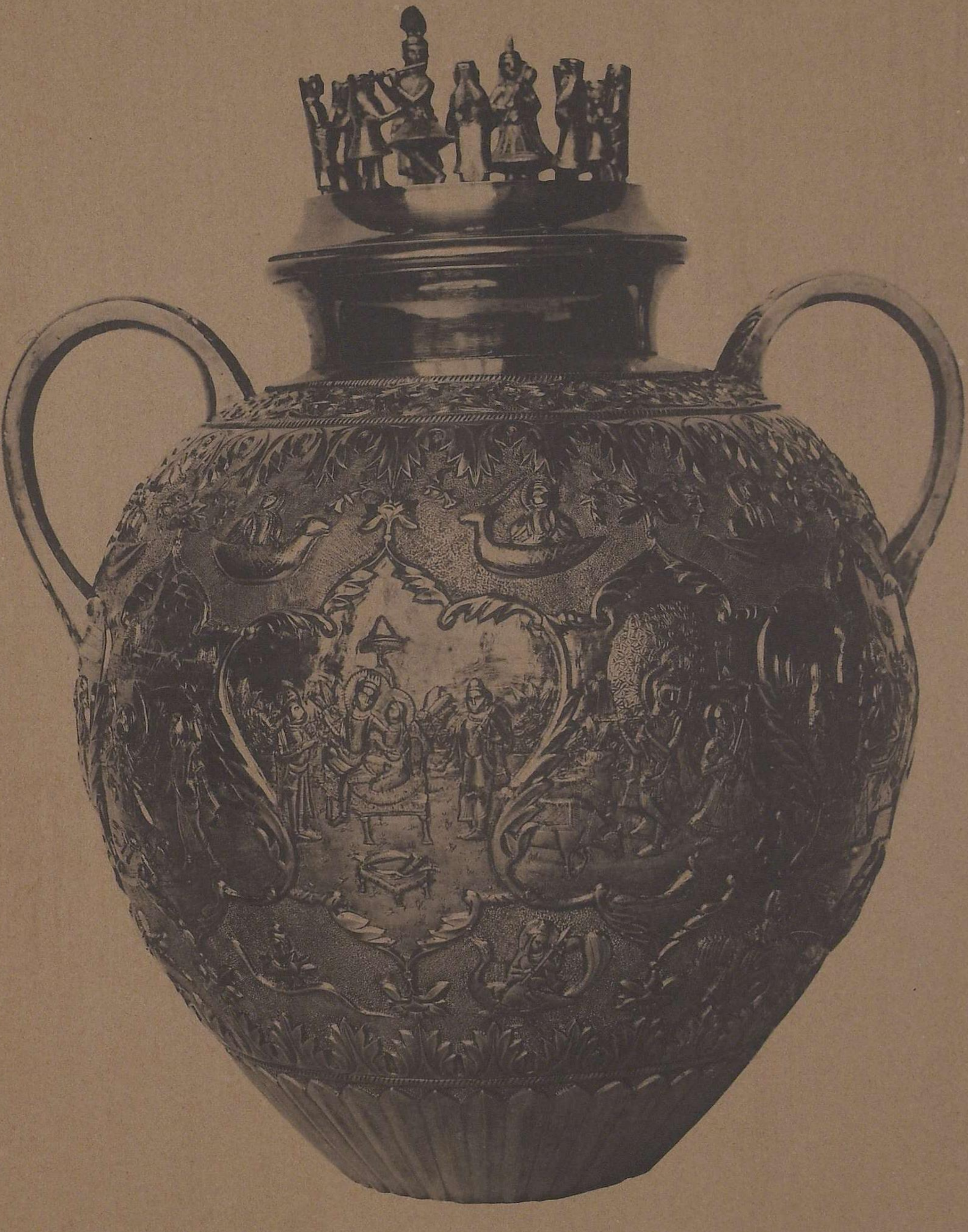
65.—Cutch Silver Ware.

66.—Cutch Silver Ware.

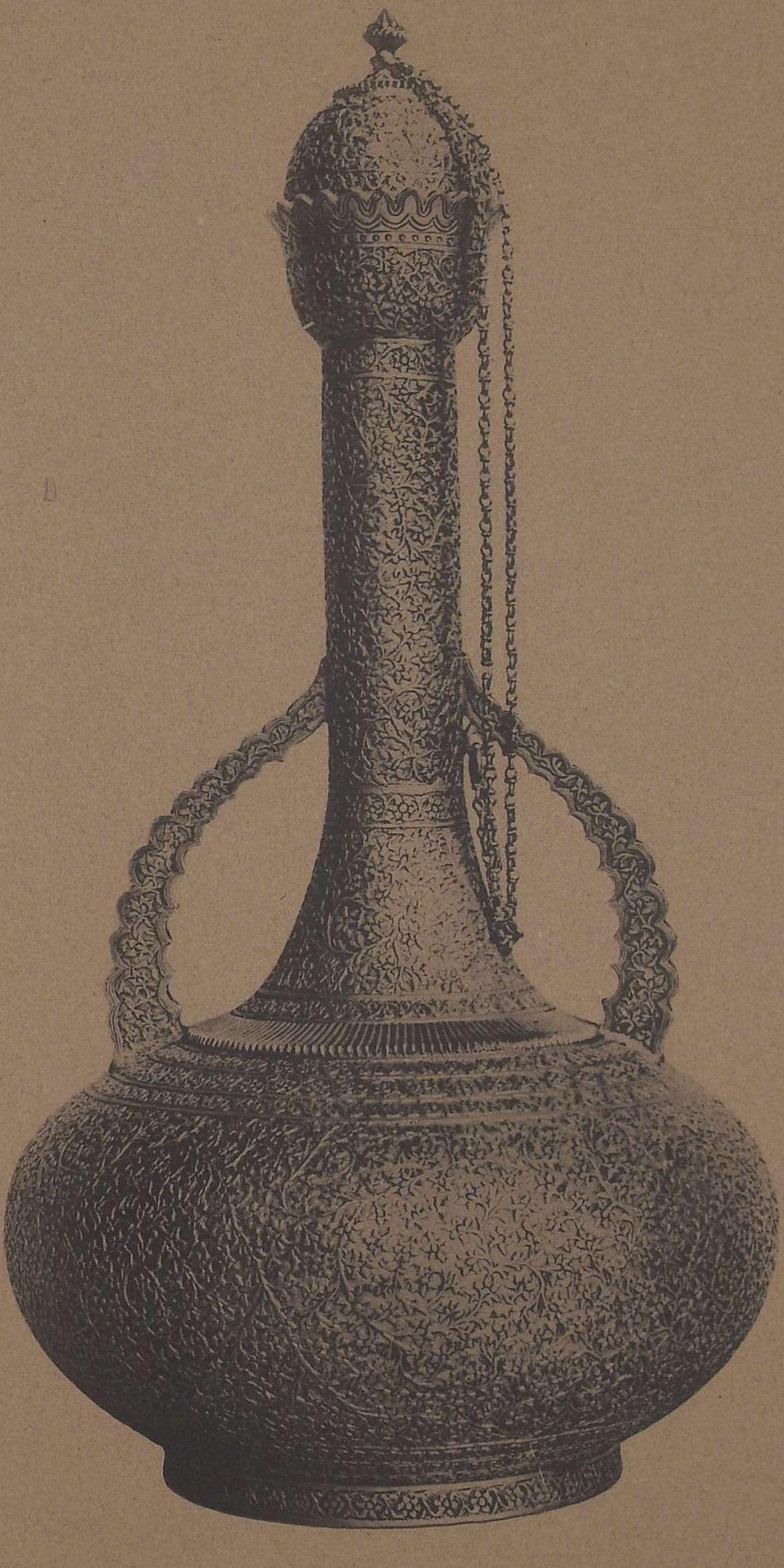
67.—Cutch Silver Ware.

68.—Cutch Silver Ware.

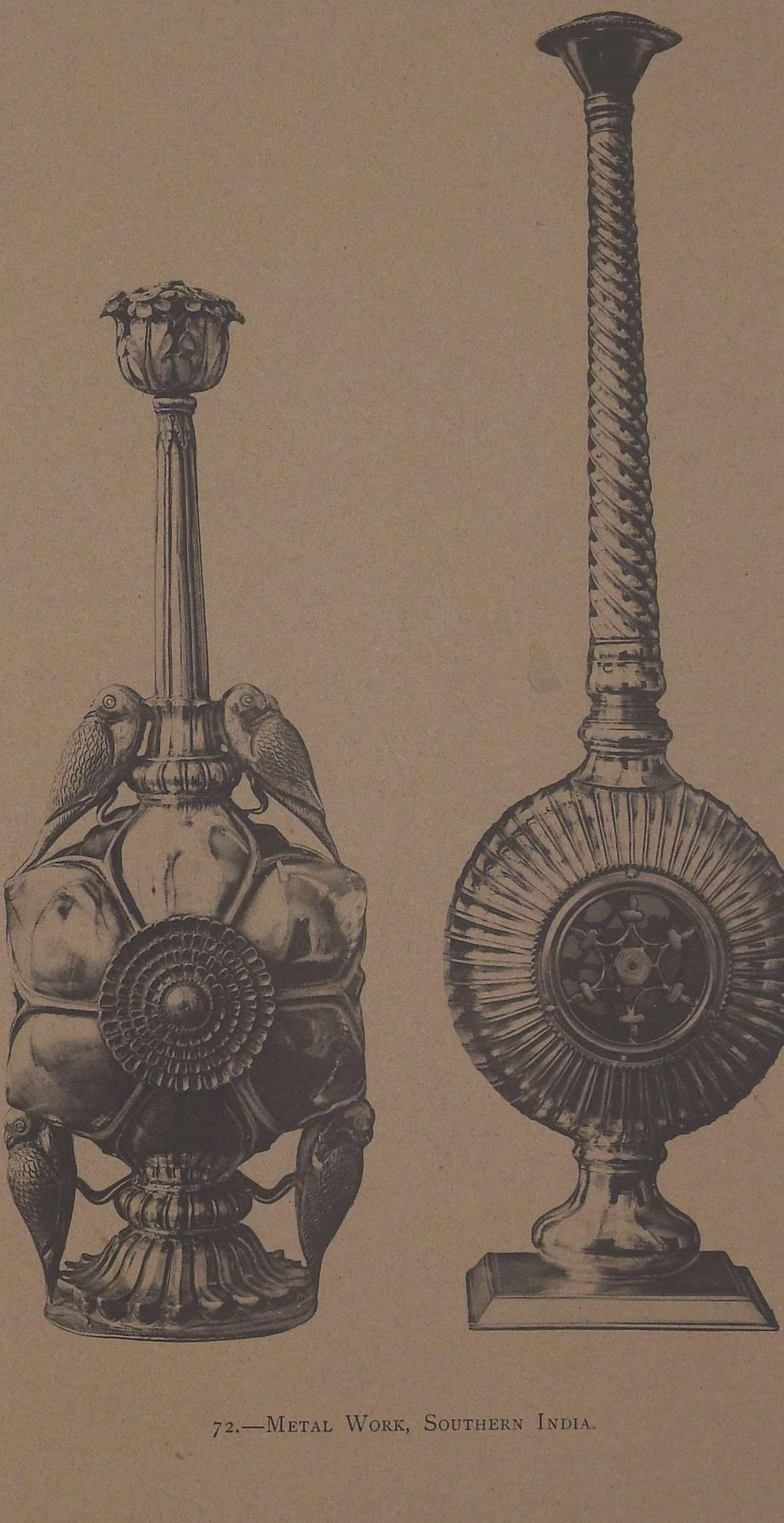
69.—Cutch Silver Ware.



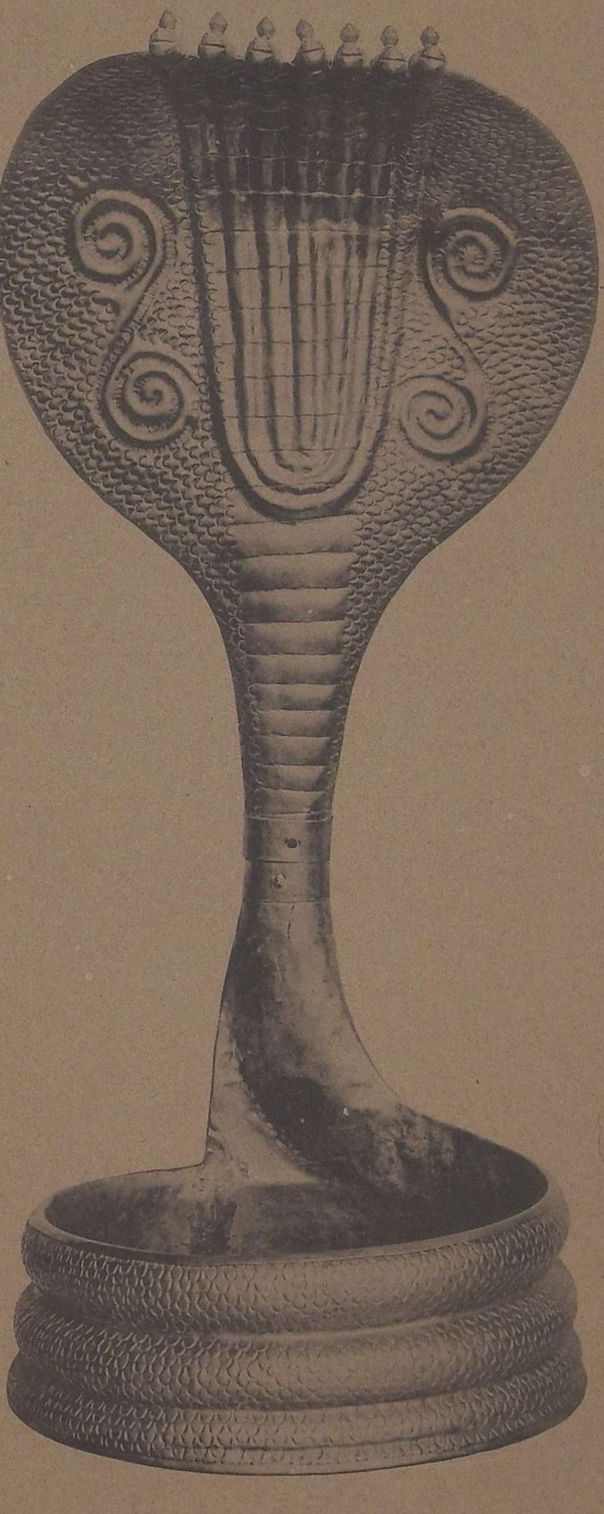
70.—Brass Work, Jeypore.



71.—Metal Work, Cashmere.

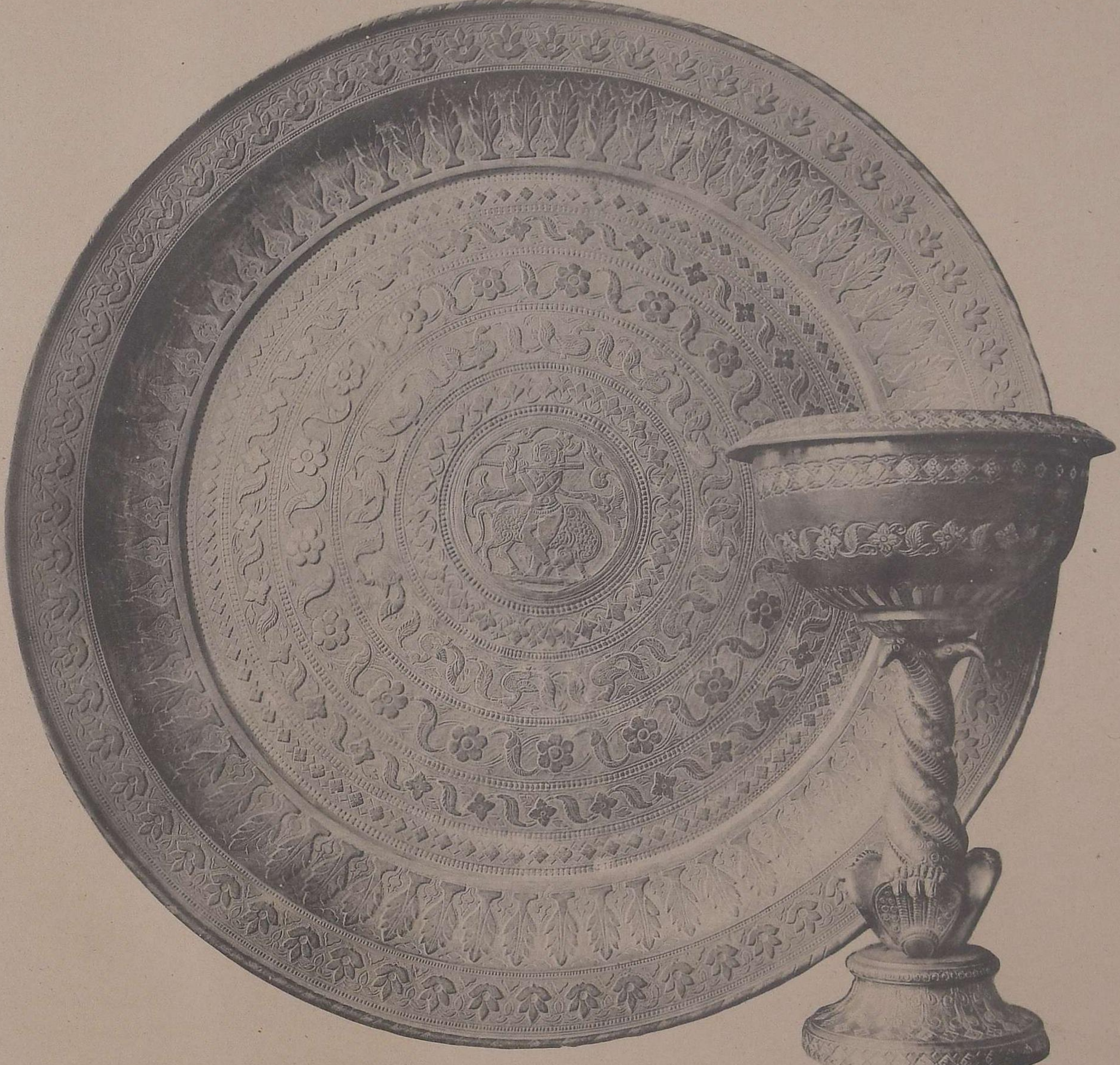


72.—Metal Work, Southern India.



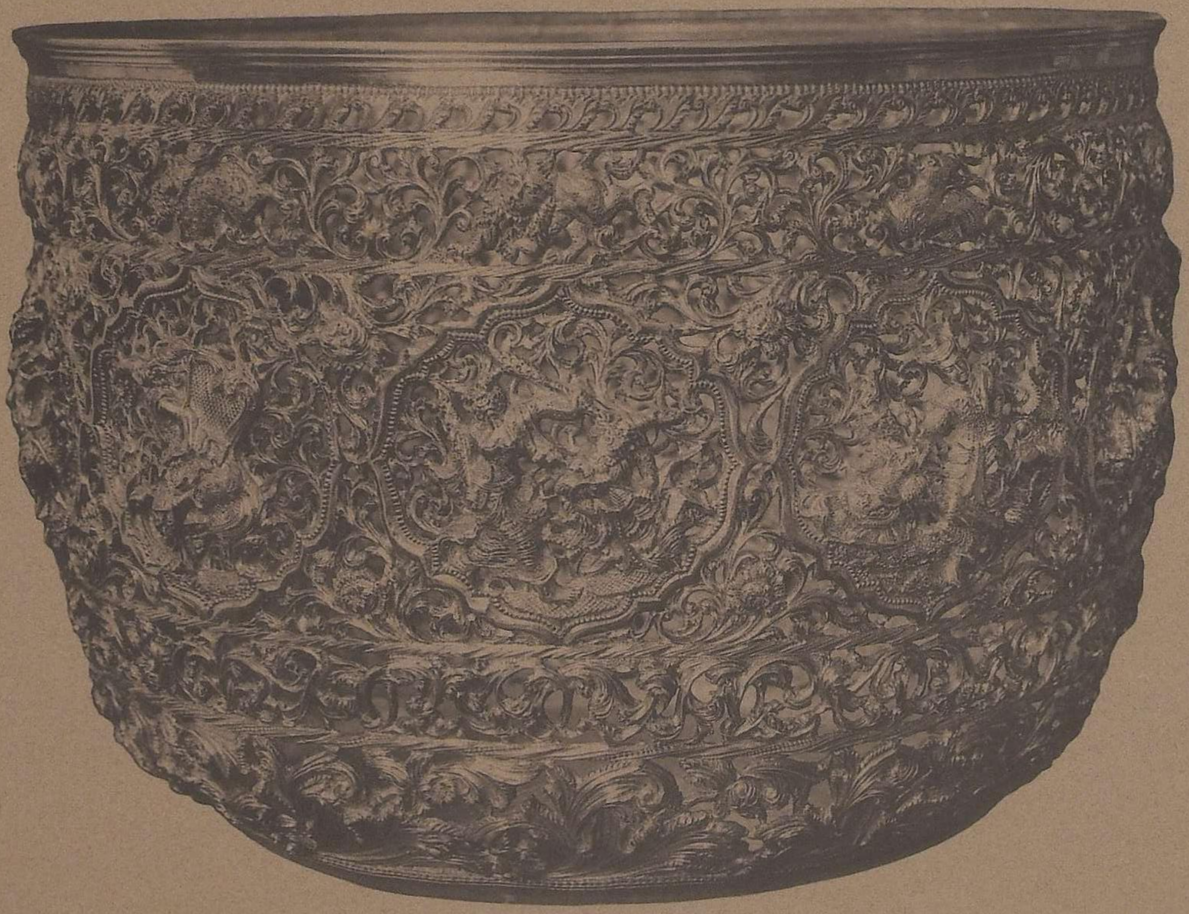
73.—Metal Work, Southern India.

74.—Metal Work, Madras.



75.—Metal Work, Madras.

76.—Metal Work, Madras and Burma.



77.—Silver Work, Burma.

78.—Silver Work, Burma.

79.—Indian reproduction from a Persian original.

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